1005

SECRET

[redacted]

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

11 September 1990

Chile: A Civil-Military Relations Scorecard [redacted]

Summary

President Aylwin has undertaken a strategy designed to assert his authority over the military and win its confidence before addressing the arduous task of restructuring the armed forces along lines compatible with civilian rule. Over his first six months in office, he has made good progress, winning strong backing from three of the service chiefs and holding in check Army chief Pinochet, whose obstructionist tactics indicate he continues to harbor political ambitions. Aylwin's efforts to manage the emotionally-charged issue of human rights violations during the Pinochet era have had mixed results, however; the issue has caused unease within the armed forces and remains a stumblingblock to smooth civil-military relations. Moreover, the threat of growing terrorism by the far left could emerge to complicate Aylwin's strategy if he is compelled to rely more on the military's resources to counter violence. Further into his term Aylwin must tackle the more difficult tasks of fostering an outlook in the

[redacted]

Declassified and Approved for Release July 2000

CL BY: [redacted]
DECL: OADR
DERV: MULTIPLE

[redacted]

SECRET

252

armed forces that is more in line with democratic rule and dismantling the institutional framework created by Pinochet which insulates the military from civilian control and grants it extraordinary prerogatives. [redacted]

* * * * *

Aylwin's Strategy

One of President Aylwin's chief challenges, as Chile's first democratically elected leader following nearly two decades of military rule, has been asserting his authority over the armed services and facilitating their departure from the political arena. On the plus side, Aylwin inherited a military more anxious than antagonistic toward civilian rule. [redacted] many officers were at least reconciled to, if not supportive of, the return to democracy and found Aylwin, a political moderate, an acceptable presidential candidate. Nevertheless, the armed forces are unsure of the "rules of the game" under a civilian government and wary of any infringement on the autonomy and broad prerogatives they have long enjoyed. [redacted]

Aylwin has adopted a pragmatic short-term strategy for dealing with the armed forces, taking measured steps to assert his authority as chief executive and curb military attempts to question his policy initiatives. Recognizing the present limits of military tolerance for civilian rule, however, Aylwin has picked his battles carefully and postponed challenging the institutional framework.[1] He probably calculates that the arduous task of reshaping the military cannot take place until strains are eased and civilian institutions are strong enough to shoulder oversight responsibilities. [redacted]

Upon taking office Aylwin demonstrated his intention to subordinate the armed forces commanders to civilian rule, naming a senior member of his party as Defense Minister, and appointing civilian defense subsecretaries for each service branch. He was careful, nevertheless, to select political moderates who had not previously been hostile toward the armed forces. He also asked the Commanders of the Air and

[1]To complicate Aylwin's task, Pinochet took a number of steps before the democratic transition to further insulate the military from civilian controls, such as guaranteeing that the military's share of the national budget will not be cut and limiting the right of Congress to investigate military [redacted]

Police Forces to stay on, gaining their public pledges to respect civilian rule and support improved civil-military relations. This move prevented Pinochet--who refuses to resign--from being the only commander with experience from the previous regime. All the chiefs, except for Pinochet, appear to accept Aylwin as their Commander-in-Chief and have avoided publicly criticizing executive policy initiatives.

Handling Pinochet

Former President Pinochet remains, not unexpectedly, one of the largest stumblingblocks to constructive relations between the government and the military. From his current position as Army Commander, where he is constitutionally entitled to serve for the next eight years, Pinochet has tried to continue exerting political influence, initially flaunting his opposition to the President through critical statements and absences from government functions.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

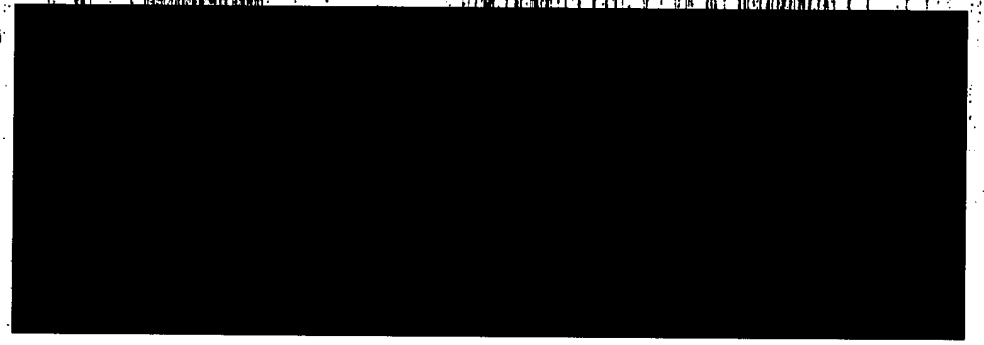
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

25X1

[redacted]



Coping with Human Rights

The swiftness and force with which the emotionally-charged issue of Pinochet-era human rights abuses seized the national political stage caught the new government somewhat off-guard, in our view, and have complicated Aylwin's strategy for managing civil-military relations. Aylwin has faced a steady barrage of demands from the far left, victims' relatives, and some members of his own coalition for full investigations and trials of individuals accused of human rights violations. The right and many in the military, however, have steadfastly opposed any investigations that could result in prosecutions and damage to the armed forces' reputations. The Army hierarchy is particularly concerned about the possibility of a full investigation of the 1976 murder of Orlando Letelier--Chile's former Foreign Minister under the Allende government--which would implicate high-level military officials of the former regime. [redacted]

Aylwin has tried to follow a middle road, allowing the left and the victims to air their grievances while refraining from using the issue to challenge the military's institutional structure and prerogatives. The government decided early on to go public promptly with information on the discoveries of mass graves of persons executed after the 1973 coup in the hope of giving vent to public frustrations, and clearing the issue from the political stage early in Aylwin's term. However, the President has stated that although the process of national reconciliation demands inquiries into past abuses, individuals--not institutions--should be held accountable. He has also held out the possibility of granting pardons, recognizing that prosecuting senior officers would be seen by many in the armed services as an attack on their institutions. Moreover, he has not challenged the 1978 Amnesty law, which protects former officials from prosecution for abuses prior to that date, to avoid provoking a strong military reaction. Finally, [redacted] has also refrained from using [redacted]

[redacted]

25X

rights issue to try to unseat Pinochet. The President knows that Pinochet is still admired by many in the military, [redacted]

Nevertheless, Aylwin's pragmatic approach has failed to satisfy critics on either end of the political spectrum or to avoid strains in civil-military relations. Aylwin's creation last April of the Rettig commission, narrowly mandated to investigate abuses of the Pinochet era and compensate victims, sparked a wave of public criticism of the military. The far left, sensing an opportunity to regain some political stature, has seized on the human rights issue to press for Pinochet's removal and the repeal of the Amnesty law, and extremists have already made two assassination attempts--one successful--against former Pinochet security officials accused of human rights atrocities. [redacted]

The military hierarchy has adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the Rettig Commission, although the strong public outcry following the first discoveries of mass graves raised fears in the armed forces about the government's ability--and desire--to control the political impact of the human rights issue. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Outlook

Over the next year or so, Aylwin's progress toward gaining the military's confidence in civilian rule and its full cooperation in fighting terrorism will largely depend on Aylwin's ability to manage the political pressures arising from the human rights issue. If trials result, Aylwin will come under increasing pressure to clarify his position to the military regarding prosecutions of individual officers as well as pardons. In our view, he could try to strike a secret bargain with the military hierarchy in which the latter agrees to the trial of a few "expendable" officers in return for a promise of government amnesties and protection for senior officers. [redacted]

So long as Aylwin can manage the human rights controversy, prospects for further removing Pinochet from the political stage in coming months appear good. However, although many officers reportedly recognize that the government cannot ignore the issue of past abuses, many also could feel compelled to close ranks behind Pinochet if Aylwin appears unwilling or unable to deflect public demand for exhaustive legal proceedings. In our view, this would be particularly true for senior Army officers who commanded units after the 1973 coup. Similarly, any attempt to implicate Pinochet in human rights abuses or to vote him out as Army Commander through the NSC would significantly raise the risks that the Army and other services would ally with him. [redacted]

[redacted]

Long-term prospects for subordinating the Chilean military to civilian authority will depend on the government's ability to establish a cooperative relationship with the armed forces and to register progress in redirecting the services toward professional military duties. In our view, a strategy that encourages the military to concentrate on external security issues--perhaps through equipment upgrades, joint training exercises, and educational opportunities with other professional militaries, from which the Chilean services have long been isolated--probably would have the best chance of success. For example, Aylwin hopes that progress in addressing the Letelier case will prompt Washington to lift the Kennedy-Harkin Amendment--which prohibits US military assistance to Chile--and allow for greater interaction between the two countries' armed forces. At the same time, the government will need to acknowledge the military's interests in major national policy issues. [redacted]

Over the remainder of his four year term, Aylwin will also have to dismantle the institutional and legal framework that gives the military autonomy and political authority, and he will have to strengthen civilian institutions so that they can assume responsibilities currently held by the military. This will include:

-- Circumscribing the military's role in the justice system, while enhancing civilian capabilities

-- Modifying constitutional provisions granting the military significant responsibility for internal law and order and transferring internal security duties, including domestic intelligence activities, to civilian agencies within a non-military ministry

-- Developing a professional cadre of civilians to assist the executive branch in the design and implementation of national security policy

-- Repealing legislation giving the military autonomy in matters of budget and force structure, and returning these to the executive and to Congress.

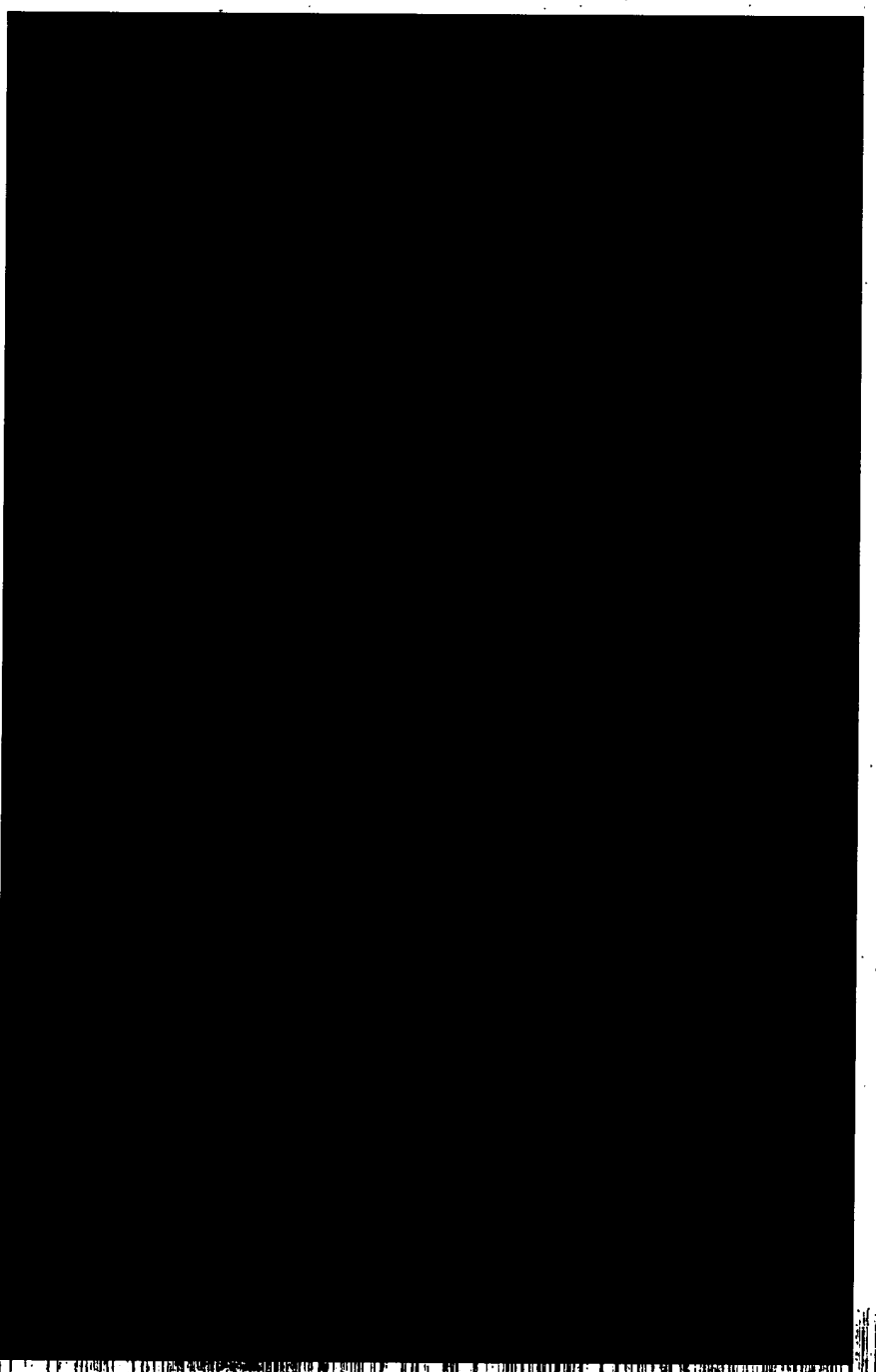
[redacted]

SUBJECT: Chile: A Civil Military Relations Scorecard

[redacted]

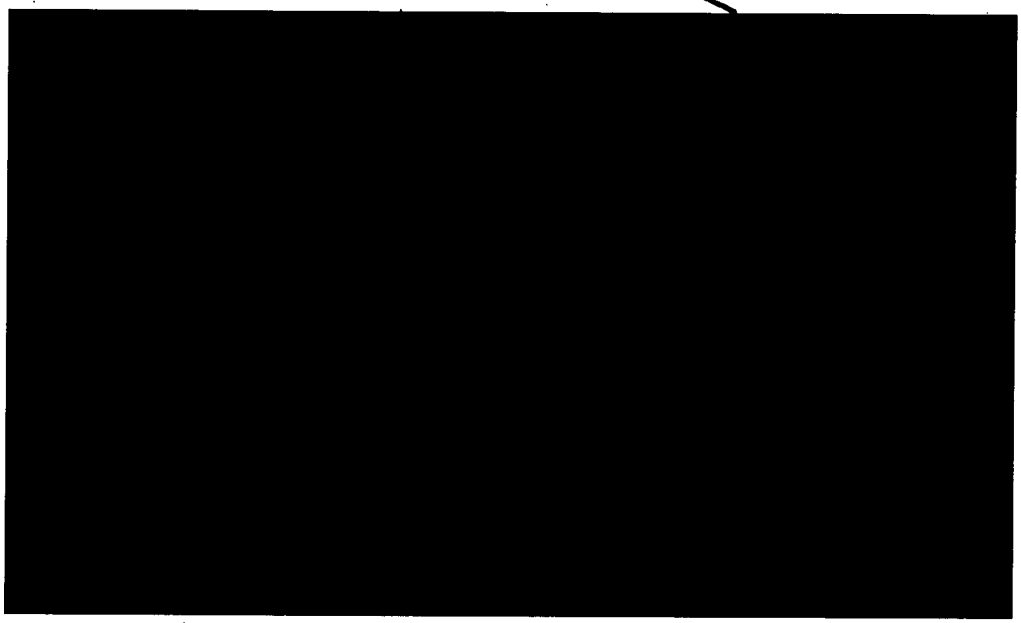
25X

[redacted]



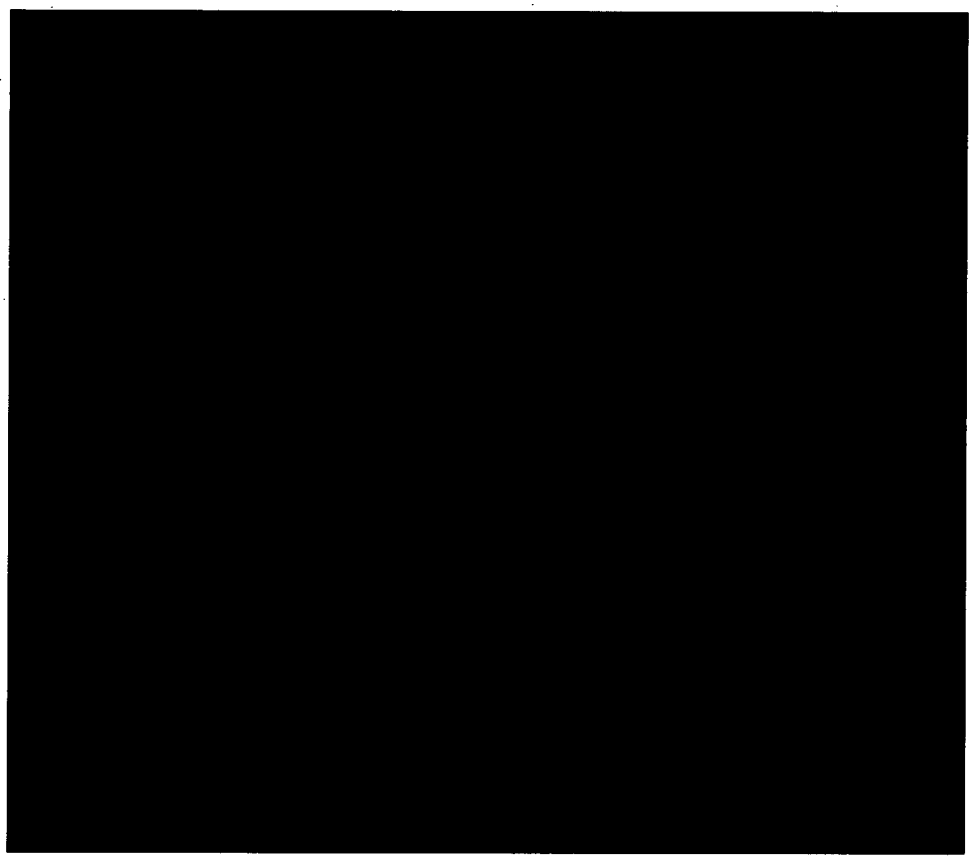
25X1

[redacted]



[redacted]

SUBJECT: Chile: A Civil Military Relations Scorecard



[redacted]